

LAW et al.
Appl. No. 09/763,826
June 14, 2004
Page 7

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is requested. Claims 1-4, 6 and 9, 11 and 13-21 are in the case.

I. THE INTERVIEW

At the outset, the undersigned wishes to thank the Examiner (Mr. Alexander) for kindly agreeing to conduct an interview in this case. The interview was held on June 7, 2004, and the helpful comments and suggestions of the Examiner were most appreciated. The substance of the interview will be clear from the comments presented below.

II. THE ANTICIPATION REJECTION

Claims 1-4, 6 and 9-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Yager et al. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

During the interview, agreement was reached that the amendments as proposed herein to claim 1 would render the claimed invention both novel and non-obvious over the cited art. In light of that agreement and in order to expedite prosecution, claim 1 has been amended to include the amendments agreed upon during the interview. The remaining claims have been amended to be consistent with amended claim 1. No new matter is entered.

The amendments submitted with this response are presented in order to secure early allowance of the application, and are not to be taken as a

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LAW et al.
Appl. No. 09/763,826
June 14, 2004
Page 8

concession that any merit resides the outstanding rejection. Subject matter cancelled by the present amendment has been deleted without prejudice to the possibility of pursuing that subject matter in a separate continuing application. Withdrawal of the outstanding anticipation rejection is respectfully requested.

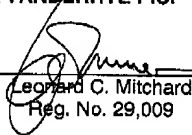
It is certified that the present response has been forwarded to the Examiner via facsimile transmission (571-273-1254) on June 14, 2004.

Allowance of the application is awaited.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: _____


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